

HELPING VETERANS ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Assisting the brave men and women who have served our country is one of the most important aspects of serving in Congress. To repay our veterans for protecting our freedom, we must ensure they receive the high-quality care and benefits they have earned.

My office works directly with veterans and their families to help navigate federal agencies and receive their hard-earned benefits and medals. **In the 116th Congress, my office has assisted 271 veterans receive VA benefits, lost service records, earned war medals, and more – resulting in them receiving over \$200,000 in combined benefits and paid medical bills.** If you or a loved one is a veteran who needs assistance with the Department of Veterans Affairs, please do not hesitate to contact my Yakima office at (509) 452-3243 or Richland office at (509) 713-7374.

SPONSORED & COSPONSORED LEGISLATION

H.R. 299 – Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act: I cosponsored this bill which restores VA disability benefits for Blue Water Navy veterans for diseases related to Agent Orange exposure. These veterans waited nearly 50 years to receive this compensation and claims for more than 22,500 Blue Water Navy veterans have been approved by the VA since its passage. *This bill was signed into law on June 25, 2020.*

H.R. 4305 – PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act: I cosponsored this bill which creates a program within the VA to give veterans access to treatment derived from working with service dogs. The dogs are trained to do things like block a veteran to give them space in a crowd, or to wake them up if they're having a nightmare. Upon completion of the program, the veterans may adopt their dogs to provide continuing therapy. *This bill passed the House on February 5, 2020.*

H.R. 562 – Veterans' Agricultural Apprenticeship Act: I cosponsored this bill which instructs the USDA to work with state departments of agriculture to identify farmers and ranchers eligible for a direct loan to train apprentice veterans. This loan would be repaid after harvest season.

H.R. 2127 – Toxic Exposures in the American Military (TEAM) Act: I cosponsored this bill which will improve access to care and benefits for veterans who were exposed to toxic substances in the military. The bill will allow them to enroll in the VA healthcare system, create a process for the VA to establish a presumption of service connection for benefits, and advance scientific research into the effects of toxic exposure.

H.R. 3495 – Improve Well-Being for Veterans Act: I cosponsored this bill which enhances the coordination and planning of Veteran mental health and suicide prevention services and would develop measurement tools to track the effectiveness of these community-level programs in order to address the suicide crisis and its impact on Veterans.

H.R. 1424 – Fallen Warrior Battlefield Cross Memorial Act: This bill allows fallen heroes to be honored at their gravesite with a replica of the Battlefield Cross. The Battlefield Cross is a memorial marker typically consisting of a soldier's helmet, rifle, identification tag, and pair of boots that serves to honor and respect servicemembers who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. *This bill was signed into law on January 7, 2020.*

H.R. 4356 – Protecting Families of Fallen Servicemembers Act: This bill allows the families of fallen and critically injured servicemembers to end their phone, cable, or internet contract without being financially penalized. *This bill was signed into law on January 5, 2021.*

H.R. 4771 – VA Tele-Hearing Modernization Act: This bill requires the Board of Veterans' Appeals—the branch of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that provides individuals with an opportunity to disagree with VA decisions on benefits eligibility— to permit veterans with pending appeals to teleconference into Board hearings. This law will benefit rural veterans who may live far from the nearest VA and limit vulnerable veterans' exposure to COVID-19. *This bill was signed into law on April 10, 2020.*

H.R. 3218 – Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act: This bill provides a cost-of-living increase for wartime disability compensation; compensation for dependents; clothing allowance; dependency and indemnity compensation to surviving spouses; and, dependency and indemnity compensation to children paid to our wounded warriors and their families for injuries they suffered while serving our nation in uniform. This increase began on December 1, 2020. *This bill was signed into law on October 20, 2020.*

H.R. 7105– Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act: This landmark piece of legislation expands medical services for female veterans and require the VA to adopt policies to curb harassment and sexual assault; adds oversight of colleges receiving GI Bill money, making them responsible for overpayments, and penalize them for falsely advertising educational programs; modifies and expands the VA's housing programs; and provides child care assistance to eligible veterans and health-care services to newborn children of veterans. *This bill was signed into law on January 5, 2021.*

H.R. 1276 – SAVE LIVES Act: This bill expands VA's authority so they can provide vaccines to veterans who are not currently enrolled in VA's healthcare system; caregivers of veterans who are enrolled in VA home-based and long-term care programs, veterans living abroad, spouses of veterans, and CHAMPVA recipients. *This bill was signed into law on March 24, 2021.*

H.R. 8247 – Veterans COMPACT Act: This bill establishes new – and expands existing – mental health programs for eligible veterans. Under the bill, the VA would be required to provide veterans emergency suicide care at a VA facility or outside of the department; educate caregivers and family members of veterans with mental health disorders, reach out to veterans who haven't received health care through the VA in the past two years; and provide annual crisis intervention training to VA police officers. This bill was signed into law on December 5, 2020.